

Acts 27–28 notes

Hallel Fellowship (<http://hallel.info>)

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All passages from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

This gripping account of the voyage of Paul, Luke and companions to Rome underscores that we can trust God's promises to Israel about the Messiah past, present and future and to us.

Textual note on Acts 27:1

- In a group of 4th and 5th century manuscripts from the “Western Text,”¹ there is additional information that “the governor” (Papyrus 112) or “Festus” (Peshitta) decided that “he,” i.e. Paul, should be sent to Italy.
 - “And Festus commanded, respecting him, that he should be sent to Italy, unto Caesar. And he delivered Paul, and other prisoners with him, to a certain man, a centurion of the Augustan cohort, whose name was Julius.” (Acts 27:1 Peshitta)
 - “And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus’ band.” (Acts 27:1 KJV)
- The KJV, which largely uses the Textus Receptus collection of Greek copies, and modern versions such as the New American Standard, which uses the Nestle-Aland collection of antiquity-weighted manuscripts, uses “we,” rather than “he.”
- This is another indication that the Aramaic *Peshitta* is a 4th or 5th century translation of Greek manuscripts, rather than the original source text of Greek translations. The *Peshitta* contains additional information that is in Greek manuscripts of that time but not in earlier Greek manuscripts.

Acts 27:1–38 — A harrowing sea voyage from Caesarea to Rome

The sea route Paul, Luke and the rest of the group took from Caesarea to Rome was 1,900 miles.

“since even the fast was already over” (Acts 27:9)

- “The fast” refers to Yom haKippurim, or the Day of Atonement, which comes on the 10th day of the seventh month of God’s calendar. That roughly corresponds to September.
- There is a common contention among commentators on *Acts* that the Hebraisms in the account stop after the mission starts expanding to the nations, suggesting that the good news of the Kingdom sheds the Law of Moses.
 - Yet continued matter-of-fact references in *Acts* to Nazir vows (Acts 18:18; 21:17–26), Pentecost (Feast of Weeks, or Shavu’ot, Acts 2:1; 20:16) and “the fast” suggest that Luke and other early believers hadn’t cast “shed” the Torah as the guide to holy living as justified believers, i.e. believers declared not guilty before God by the atonement of Yeshua.

“But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo [Strong’s Greek 2146b]” (Acts 27:14)

“But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon [Strong’s 2148].” (Acts 27:14 KJV)

- 2146b. Εὐρακύλων *Eurakulon*; from Εὖρος (the east wind) and the Lat. Aquilo; the Euraquilo, a northeast wind: — Euraquilo(1).
- 2148. Εὐροκλύδων *Eurokludon*, yoo-rok-loo’-dohn; from Εὖρος *Euros* (the east wind) and 2830; a storm from the East (or southeast), i.e. (in modern phrase) a Levanter: — Euroklydon.
- Philip Comfort described this difference between the KJV rendering, which follows the “variant” and Textus Receptus body of manuscripts, and the rendering in many modern literal and dynamic versions, which use the Wescott-Hort and Nestle-Aland collections of older manuscripts:
“The Westcott and Hort’s *The New Testament in the Original Greek* and *The Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (26th and 27th editions) and *The United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament* (3rd and 4th corrected editions) reading has a hybrid word, from Greek εὖρος (‘east wind’) and Latin aquilo (‘north wind’)—hence, a ‘Northeaster.’ The variant reading has a compound word derived from two Greek words, εὖρος (‘east wind’) and κλυδων (‘surging waves’)—suggesting a sea storm coming in from the east.”²

1 Acts 26:32 from the apparent reading of Greek Papyrus 112 (c. 5th century) and from the Aramaic Peshitta (c. 4–5th century), according to Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, Tyndale House Publisher, Inc., 2008. The Peshitta reading is said to be a margin reading from the 7th century Syriac Harclean collection of the Apostolic Scriptures. Comfort said that ancient scribes and modern scholars have had trouble with a Roman order that would have sent Paul to Rome with companions.

2 *Ibid.*

“ ‘For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.” Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on a certain island.’ ” (Acts 27:23–26)

- How much did Paul know about the coming disaster at sea? His earlier comment, seemingly based on the time of year, suggested that everyone else on board was in danger of death:
“ ‘Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.’ ” (Acts 27:10)
“ ‘Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.’ ” (Acts 27:21–22)

“Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat.” (Acts 27:35)

- Paul gave a visible teaching that not only should all aboard trust in God’s protection in this situation but also give thanks for everything, including having food to eat.
- How are we displaying our “thanks to God in the presence of all”?

Acts 27:39–28:10 — Shipwrecked on Malta

About 500 miles by sea from the island of Clauda to Malta.

“When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, ‘Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.’ ” (Acts 28:4)

- “Barbarians” comes from *barbaros* (βάρβαρος, Strong’s 915), which was a common Greek word for foreigners not familiar with Greek culture:
“The Greeks used *barbaros* of any foreigner ignorant of the Greek language and the Greek culture, whether mental or moral, with the added notion, after the Persian war, of rudeness and brutality. Hence, the word is applied in the N.T., but not reproachfully, in Acts 28:2,4, to the inhabitants of Malta (i.e. *Melitē*, which see), who were of Phoenician or Punic origin”³
- “Justice” seems to be a personification, or reference to a deity.
- God’s promise to Paul that he would end up in Rome was underscored here, as was God’s supremacy over “fate” or any deity.

Acts 28:15–29 — Paul and his companions arrived in Rome, and Paul addressed

“They said to him, ‘We have neither received letters from Iudea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you. “But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.’ When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Iesous, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.” (Acts 28:21–23)

- Paul, again, recounts his innocent persecution by the Sanhedrin in Israel.
- The leaders of the Jewish congregations of Rome and the surrounding area — Three Inns, etc., were about 30 miles away — were willing to hear Paul speak even though the “sect” of The Way “is spoken against everywhere.”
- Eventually, though, Paul encountered those who would believe in Yeshua as Messiah and those who wouldn’t.

“And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him” (Acts 28:30)

- Acts seems to have an incomplete end.
- Tradition says:
 - Paul was executed in Rome in A.D. 64–68.
 - Paul apparently thought he would prevail at trial (Philemon 1:22; Phil. 1:25; 2:24).
 - Some accounts (1st Clement 5, the Muratori Canon and the apocryphal Acts of Peter) said that Paul was released for a time and traveled to Spain, as he wrote in Rom. 15:28 he wanted to do.
 - Peter was crucified upside-down under emperor Nero, whose persecution of Jews in Rome is dated to A.D. 67, so Peter’s death is said to be between A.D. 64–67.

“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.” (Acts 28:31)

3 Thayer, Joseph H. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.